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A LEGAL PUZZLE

A FARCICAL COMEDY

BY

W. A. TREMAYNE

DICK & FITZGERALD

PUBLISHERS

18 Ann Street, New York

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A LEGAL PUZZLE

Farcical Comedy in Three Acts

BY

W. A. TREMAYNE

AUTHOR OF "A RUNAWAY COUPLE," ETC.

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NOTE.—The professional acting rights of this play are expressly reserved by the publishers, to whom theatrical managers, who wish to produce it, should apply. Amateur representation may be made without such application and without charge.

A LEGAL PUZZLE.

CHARACTERS.

JACK LESTER.....*A young lawyer without a brief*
CAPT. SAMUEL BARKER.....*Late of the Royal Navy*
DR. JAMES SANFORD.....*Lester's uncle*
CHARLES JONES.....*Lester's friend, involved in a law suit*
CYRUS SMITH, alias CYRIL VAN SMYTHE...*A retired chandler*
RICHARD SHARPLY.....*Editor of the Morning Times*
MARY BARKER.....*Capt. Barker's daughter*
HARRIET SMITH, alias HATTIE VAN SMYTHE...*Cyrus' niece*
MRS. JENNINGS.....*Lester's landlady*
M'LLE. PEARL LORRAINE.....*Of the Imperial Music Hall*
MANDY.....*Servant at Mrs. Jennings*
WAITER.....*At Royal Hotel, Brighton*

NOTE.—The waiter can be doubled by Sharply, Hattie by Mandy, and Pearl by Mrs. Jennings.

TIME.—The present. LOCALITY.—London and Brighton, England.

TIME OF PLAYING.—Two and one-half hours.

SYNOPSIS.

ACT I.—MRS. JENNINGS' boarding-house, London. Unfortunate MANDY. LESTER's bills. MRS. JENNINGS wants her rent. Refusal of the assignment. Angry CAPTAIN BARKER and angrier DR. SANFORD. The appearance of LESTER's much-longed-for client. All off for Brighton.

ACT II.—Parlor in the Brighton Hotel. Anxiety of all the men to meet M'LLE. PEARL, especially Lester as repre-

sentative of the London Morning Times. PEARL, shamming illness, foils them. LESTER rescues HATTIE from a watery grave. VAN SMYTHE lectures LESTER on the follies of youth. Effusive HATTIE shocks her uncle. LESTER assumes VAN SMYTHE's legal case, unaware of his being the Smith for whom he is searching. HATTIE and LESTER walk on the beach and are discovered by MARY, recently arrived. PEARL solaces MARY. PEARL and LESTER meet. She declines to be interviewed. While at her feet he is discovered by MARY and the others.

ACT III.—LESTER's room in hotel. He sees MARY and her father. Unsatisfactory conversation. Is intruded upon by VAN SMYTHE and subsequently by JONES and DR. SANFORD, who begin to make matters uncomfortable for him. PEARL beseeches him not to mail his report to his paper. He accedes, but subsequently with it as a lever he accomplishes all his desires and satisfies everyone.

COSTUMES.

Modern, and appropriate to the characters portrayed.

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES.

Cigars, lot of letters, valise for LESTER. Coins, field-glasses and letter for BARKER. Bills, papers, coins, time-table and letter for SANFORD. Money and book for JONES. Coin, money, note-book, papers and letter for SMYTHE. Money for SHARPLY. Telegram for MRS. JENNINGS. Coal-scuttle, tray, glasses, bundle of letters, papers, visiting card, time-table, valise for MANDY. Tray, glasses and cane for WAITER.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

As seen by a performer on the stage, facing the audience, R. means right hand. L., left hand of stage. C., center, R. C., right, L. C., left of center. C. D., D. R. C., and D. L. C., door in center, door in right center, and door in left center of rear flat L. 1 E., L. 2 E. and L. 3 E., first, second and third left entrances. R. 1 E., etc., first, second and third right entrances. UP, means up stage toward rear. DOWN, down stage toward footlights.

A LEGAL PUZZLE.

ACT I.

SCENE.—LESTER'S chambers, London. *A plainly furnished room, door in flat L. C. Door L. 2 E. Fire-place between R. 3 E, and R. 2 E. Table R. C. near front, chairs R. and L. of it. Sofa, L. Folding screen up R. Box of cigars on mantel-piece over fire-place. CURTAIN rises on empty stage. Knock heard at D. L. C., knock repeated, then door opens and MANDY enters. She is a very small specimen of a servant and very ragged. She carries a coal scuttle in one hand and a waiter with some empty glasses on it in the other and a bundle of letters and papers under her arm. She bursts open the door, stumbles and rolls over, the glasses falling one way and the scuttle another, and the papers and envelopes scattering over the floor. She sits up C., rubbing her shin and looks ruefully around.*

MRS. JENNINGS (off L. C.). Mandy, Mandy. (*A pause, MANDY gets up hastily, and begins to pick up lumps of coal, glasses and letters, turning nervously from one to the other*) Mandy, Mandy, what's the matter?

MANDY (*redoubling her efforts to pick up letters etc.*). Nothing, ma'am.

ENTER MRS. J. D. L. C.

MRS. J. (*stopping in the doorway and staring at MANDY*). Nothing!! (*MANDY stops in the middle of her work and gazes at MRS. J. as if transfixed*) Do you know where girls go to who tell lies? Nothing! Why the room looks like a pig-sty.

MANDY. If you please, m'am, I—I couldn't help it.

MRS. J. But you ought to help it. This habit of dropping things is growing on you, and it's your duty to overcome it. Always do your duty, Mandy. (*Crosses and sits on sofa L. whilst MANDY picks up the coal and gathers up the letters,*

gives them a rub on her apron and places them on table R. C.) Look how I do my duty towards the boarders, I want you to do the same.

MANDY (*meekly*). Yes, m'am.

MRS. J. (*talking very loud and looking at L. 2 E.*). Even if Mr. Lester hasn't paid his rent, *don't* neglect him, or give him cause for complaint. I don't, and be very careful who you admit to see him, he has an awful lot of creditors and no money to settle with or I am sure he would have paid a lone widow who has a hard struggle in this vale of tears, and who— (*Ring at the door bell, MANDY rushes wildly up to D. L. C.*) Mandy. (*MANDY stops*) Remember what I told you.

MANDY. Yes, m'am.

[EXIT MANDY D. L. C. *bumping herself against the door post as she goes out.*

MRS. J. (*rising*). I wonder if he heard that? I hope he did. (*Crosses to table*) It does people good to hear the truth sometimes. (*Picks up some of the letters and reads from the envelopes*) Brown and Shaw, first-class tailors. J. Johnson, hatter. Flax & Hyde bootmakers. Bills, bills, and every one of them unpaid, I'll swear. Well, if ever I—

MANDY (*off L. C.*). It ain't no use, you can't see him, he ain't in, and if you don't believe me the missus will tell you so herself, I'll bring her down, I'll—

ENTER MANDY D. L. C. *backing into the room and bumping herself against the post followed by SHARPLY.*

SHARPLY. Don't talk nonsense, Jack out at this time in the morning, such a thing was never heard of. (*Seeing MRS. J.*) Good-morning, I want to see Mr. Lester.

MRS. J. I'm afraid you can't.

SHARPLY. But my good woman, it's a matter of the utmost importance.

MRS. J. That's what they all say, but he differs with them.

SHARPLY. I don't know what you're talking about, all I know is that Mr. Lester—

MRS. J. Owes you money. You ain't the only one.

SHARPLY. He doesn't owe me a penny, I'm—

MRS. J. A collector. It's all the same.

SHARPLY. I'm not; if you'll only let me explain. (*Advancing C.*)

MRS. J. (*crossing L. C.*). My good man, I haven't time to

listen. I'm a hard-working woman with my household duties to attend to.

SHARPLY. Will you tell Mr. Lester I'm here.

MRS. J. I can't, sir, it's against orders, but if you choose to leave a message or a letter.

SHARPLY. I won't, I've not time. I'll rouse him myself. (*Crosses towards L. 2 E.*)

MRS. J. (*stopping him*). Excuse me, sir, you'll do no such thing, this is *my* house, Mr. Lester is my lodger, and I'll protect his interests even if he doesn't pay his rent. (SHARPLY *tries to push past her*) Don't you dare. Mandy, fetch a policeman.

MANDY. Yes, ma'am. (*Up to L. 2 E.*)

SHARPLY. Stop! (MANDY *stops*) Good heavens, are you crazy. I tell you I must see Mr. Lester.

MRS. J. And I tell you, you can't.

ENTER LESTER L. 2 E.

LESTER. What's the row? Halloo, Sharply, want to see me?

SHARPLY. Yes, but you're a hard man to see, this good lady thinks I'm a dun. (*Crosses to LESTER L. MRS. J. goes up C.*)

LESTER. You can't blame her. Two thirds of my visiting list is recruited from that class of society. Her precautions though inconvenient are necessary, and I appreciate her devotion.

MRS. J. (*advancing C. and sniffing*). I always try to do my duty to the lodgers, and small thanks I get for it.

LESTER. True, we are an ungrateful lot, Mrs. Jennings, yet I feel that deep down in the bottom of every lodger's heart, there is a warm corner kept for you, and that I shall live to see you the recipient of a handsome testimonial of our united esteem and I shall be glad to head the list with five pounds. (*Aside, crossing*) If I can borrow it.

MRS. J. (*flouncing up to D. L. C.*). I don't want a testimonial, all I want is my rent when it is due, and I should like to get *that*. Come, Mandy, we must not waste our time here, *we've* work to do.

[EXIT followed by MANDY, with usual business of bumping.]

LESTER. You're playing in luck. I wish I had. I am the personification of idleness. Satan must have a large order to fill if he keeps my hands in. Sit down, Sharply, and make yourself at home.

SHARPLY. I can't wait, I'm in a hurry.

LESTER. You shouldn't be, it's bad for your digestion. Have a cigar. (*Crosses to mantel-piece brings over a box of cigars and offers them to SHARPLY*) They're not paid for but that needn't spoil the flavor. (*SHARPLY takes a cigar. LESTER crosses to table*) Excuse me half a minute, I'm expecting a letter.

SHARPLY (*sitting on sofa*). You've a large mail.

LESTER. Haven't I? Creditors are the best correspondents in the world. (*Turning over letters.*)

SHARPLY. And as visitors?

LESTER. Indefatigable.

SHARPLY. Your landlady must be a treasure in keeping them at bay, she defends your pocket as if it were her own.

LESTER. She wants first pickings for herself. (*Selects letter, opens it and glances over it*) Ah, all right, go ahead, what can I do for you?

SHARPLY. I'm in a devil of a hole.

LESTER. You have my sympathy, it's chronic with me.

SHARPLY. The sub-editor is sick, the sporting editor has broken his collar bone, and the staff of the "Morning Times" is demoralized generally. Will you take an assignment?

LESTER (*shaking his head*). I'm afraid I can't.

SHARPLY (*holding up letter*). Why not?

LESTER. My rich uncle's coming to town.

SHARPLY. Well?

LESTER. He objects to journalism.

SHARPLY. What nonsense.

LESTER. I agree with you, but it's a fact. If he discovered that I was connected with a newspaper I believe inside of an hour he'd cut me off with the proverbial shilling.

SHARPLY. Why?

LESTER. Ten years ago he cured a patient by accident. The cure was not effected by scientific methods, a newspaper exposed him, he has never forgiven the newspaper. There's the matter in a nutshell. Personally I should relish the novelty of earning money, to say nothing of the pleasure of obliging you, but— (*Shakes his head dubiously.*)

SHARPLY. Now, see here, Lester, for heaven's sake don't go back on me. I'm sure it's a job you'll like.

LESTER. I haven't the slightest doubt. Forbidden fruit always had a fascination for me.

SHARPLY. Surely he'll listen to reason.

LESTER. I doubt it, it's not his nature. Anyhow, prejudice aside, he holds that a gentleman should always belong to one of the professions, and that it is better to starve or live on your friends, as a lawyer or a parson, than amass a fortune in journalism or commerce. In me you behold a sacrifice to principle.

SHARPLY. Bosh, the professions are overstocked.

LESTER. I know it; I'm superfluous stock myself. (*Knock at D. L. C.*) Come in.

ENTER MANDY, D. L. C.

MANDY. If you please, sir, a man from Hyde and Flax, sir, he says he sent you an account this morning.

LESTER. I dare say, a good many gentlemen favored me that way.

MANDY. And he wants the money.

LESTER. Too bad, I can't let him have it.

MANDY. Please, sir, he says he was told to wait till he got it—

LESTER. Have you a furnished room to let, Mandy, he might take it.

MANDY. No, sir, we're full.

LESTER. It's a pity, you'd have had a perpetual boarder. Well tell him I'll call to-morrow.

MANDY. And settle the bill?

LESTER. You needn't mention that. I'll call, and we'll see about the money later. [EXIT MANDY, D. L. C.]

SHARPLY. These creditors seem to annoy you.

LESTER. They do their best.

SHARPLY. Why don't you get out of town?

LESTER. I wish I could.

SHARPLY. Take the assignment, and it will take you to Brighton.

LESTER. Will it? (*Looking ruefully at letter*) Just what I'd like. By Jove, it's too bad. What would I have to do when I got there?

SHARPLY. Interview Mlle. Pearl Lorraine.

LESTER. What! Pearl Lorraine, the Imperial Music Hall Artiste?

SHARPLY. The same. Night before last she broke her engagement and suddenly disappeared, yesterday I received pretty positive information that she was stopping incog. at the Royal Hotel, Brighton. Now I want a man of gentle-

manly appearance, good address, and unlimited assurance, to go down and interview her, and I think you'll fill the bill.

LESTER. Thanks.

SHARPLY. If you fulfil your task, your success is assured. The *Morning Times* or any other paper will be glad to get you.

LESTER. But suppose I don't succeed? (SHARPLY *shrugs his shoulders*) Exactly, then the arithmetical problem presented to my mind will be, how can one young man, minus work, minus money, minus uncle, continue to exist? I confess I don't see the solution. (*Knock at D. L. C.*) Come in.

ENTER MANDY.

MANDY. If you please, sir, there's a man below stairs, wants—

LESTER. Money? He can't have it.

MANDY. No, sir, he wants to see you.

LESTER. Same thing.

MANDY. Please, sir, he asked me to give you this. (*Holding out card.*)

LESTER (*taking card and reading it*). Charles Jones, Charles Jones.

MANDY. He writ something on the back.

LESTER (*turning card over*). Eh? Oh, I'd forgotten him, an old school fellow, show him up, Mandy.

[EXIT MANDY D. L. C.]

SHARPLY (*rising*). Well, I'm off.

LESTER. Don't go. Stay and meet Jones.

SHARPLY. Confound Jones. He won't take my assignment.

LESTER. You can't tell; he might. (SHARPLY *crosses R.* MANDY *opens D. L. C. and shows JONES in and EXIT.* He is a young man dressed in the height of fashion, he appears nervous and excited. LESTER *shakes hands with him*) Halloa, Charley old boy, delighted to see you, where the deuce did you spring from? Haven't seen you since we left school, awfully good of you to look me up.

JONES. Yes, isn't it, I mean not at all; you'll excuse me, I'm a little flustered.

LESTER. Don't mention it. Sit down.

JONES (*still standing*). Are you a lawyer?

LESTER. I believe so.

JONES. Do you want a case?

LESTER. That's what I'm looking for.

JONES. It's all right. I'll give you one.

LESTER. Thanks, could you oblige me with five pounds as a retainer?

JONES. Certainly. (*Gives money.*)

SHARPLY (*crossing to D. L. C.*). I'm going, I see you're busy.

LESTER (*to JONES*). Half a second. (*Up to SHARPLY*) Good-bye, awful sorry I can't oblige you.

SHARPLY. Oh, that's all very well but it doesn't help me. Don't know what the devil I'm going to do. I don't want to lose Pearl, and——

JONES (*who has been nervously walking up and down*). Excuse me one moment, will you go into the country?

LESTER. Of course, traveling no objection.

JONES. Could you leave for Brighton to-day?

LESTER. Eh what? Brighton, did you say?

JONES. Yes. You—don't—mind?

LESTER. Mind? Of course not.

JONES. Thank you. I'm so glad you don't mind. (*Down to sofa. Sits fidgetting with his gloves.*)

LESTER (*aside to SHARPLY*). What a streak of luck, my boy, I'll take that assignment.

SHARPLY. You will?

LESTER. Yes, kill two birds with one stone.

SHARPLY. May not see you again before you leave, but I'll mail you instructions. (*Turns to go C.*)

LESTER (*buttonholing him*). All right—by the way could you let me have something on account?

SHARPLY (*taking out money*). I suppose so.

LESTER (*taking it*). Thanks. Au revoir. Look out for the stairs. (*EXIT SHARPLY D. L. C. LESTER down to chair*) Now, I'm at your service. Have a cigar?

JONES. No, thank you. I'm too nervous to smoke.

LESTER. Keep cool, my boy, look at me. (*Lights a cigar. Sits L. of table.*)

JONES. Oh, you're different. You are used to it.

LESTER (*aside*). That's all he knows. (*Aloud*) Well go ahead.

JONES (*on sofa*). It's—it's—a very intricate case.

LESTER. Don't let that worry you, what appears difficult to the non-legal mind is simply child's play to the trained intellect.

JONES. Really? (LESTER *nods*) Two years ago I inherited a property.

LESTER. Lucky dog.

JONES. It came to me from a namesake, Charles Jones of Hampshire, first cousin on my father's side. A year after, just as I was settling down to enjoy myself, another man—

LESTER. Came along and wanted to enjoy himself, they always do.

JONES. How did you know.

LESTER. Insight of the legal mind, my boy; who was he?

JONES. Cyrus Smith, a retired chandler, a coarse illiterate, ignorant cockney.

LESTER. How charming.

JONES. He claimed to be first cousin to Charles Jones on the mother's side, and he said as the property came into the family through the female portion of it he had as much right to it as I had.

LESTER. You didn't see it in that light.

JONES. Of course not.

LESTER. Naturally, you wouldn't.

JONES. He wanted to divide, I declined.

LESTER. Good for you.

JONES. He threatened a lawsuit. I defied him. He took action.

LESTER. Good for Smith.

JONES. The case comes up in two months and I retain you.

LESTER. Good for me.

JONES. At present, he's stopping at Brighton.

LESTER. Smith?

JONES. Yes. I want you to go down there, get to know him, spy out the weakness of the enemies' camp. In short, work up a case.

LESTER. I say, isn't that more a detective's work than a lawyer's.

JONES (*jumping up*). If you don't want the case I can get someone else.

LESTER (*seizing him and pushing him back on sofa*). Sit down, you're too excitable. I didn't say I didn't want it, I'm dying for it; I only ask for information.

JONES. Then it's a bargain?

LESTER. Of course it is.

JONES. That's a weight off my mind, I think I'll smoke now.

LESTER. Help yourself. (*JONES crosses to mantel-piece and takes cigar from box. Knock at D. L. C.*) Come in.

ENTER MARY BARKER D. L. C.

MARY. Jack.

LESTER. My dear girl. (*Goes up to meet her.*)

MARY. I left papa at the bottom of the stairs, talking to an old crony, and ran ahead, he'll be up here in a minute and— (*Seeing JONES*) Oh, Jack, I thought you were alone.

LESTER. Don't mind him, it's only Jones, a client of mine. Mr. Jones, Miss Barker.

JONES. Delighted to meet you, Miss Barker. (*Nervously*) Eh? Lovely weather—you—don't—mind my smoking, do you?

LESTER (*cutting him short*). Not at all, she likes it. (*To MARY*) Did you say that Captain Barker would be here in a few minutes?

MARY. Yes.

LESTER. Then you'll excuse us, Jones. (*Wheeling chair in front of fire-place and pushing JONES into it*) Sit down, make yourself at home. (*Wheels screen from R. and places it round JONES, looking over the top*) The cigars are on the mantel-piece. (*Crosses to MARY*) My dear Mary, this is an unexpected pleasure, and you are looking so well.

MARY. It's from seeing you, Jack.

LESTER. You darling. (*Makes as though he were going to kiss her; stops, crosses back to R., peeps over the screen, crosses back, kisses her and sits with her on sofa L.*)

MARY. It's been so lonely in the country without you.

LESTER. Has it really?

MARY. Yes, and papa has been so cross and cranky.

LESTER. More so than usual? (*MARY nods her head*) He must have been lively.

MARY. And then he was away half the time, running up to London every two or three days, and when he came back he was worse than ever.

LESTER (*aside*). Wonder what the old boy's up to?

MARY. And do you know, Jack, (*looking towards the screen and then drawing close to LESTER and whispering in his ear*) just before we left town papa took to stopping out late at night, (*LESTER whistles*) and drinking a great deal more than was good for him.

LESTER (*aside*). He's getting reckless. (*Aloud*) That's too bad, Mary, I must reason with him.

MARY. I wish you would.

LESTER (*aside*). I think I see myself. How's my respected uncle. (*MARY gives a little sigh and shakes her head*) Also the same as usual?

MARY. Yes.

LESTER. Poor little girl, you must have had a hard time. (*Kisses her again after looking towards the screen.*)

MARY. I had, but I don't mind it now. (*Laying her head on his shoulder. Another kiss.*)

CAPT. BARKER (*heard outside D. L. C.*). Confound you, get out of my way. What do you mean by it? (*ENTER D. L. C. then turns round and shouts*) I'll have you discharged. Halloo, Lester, what the devil do you mean by this? Setting a half starved slavey to tell me that I can't see you—you, who are to be my son-in-law some day, worse luck. Why can't I see you?

LESTER (*rising and crossing to him*). How are you, my dear captain? Glad to see you, sit down.

BARKER. I won't sit down. I've been insulted by a slavey. I, Captain Barker, late of his majesty's Royal Navy. She took me for a bailiff.

LESTER. She's near-sighted. It's all a mistake.

BARKER. Damme, sir, they shouldn't make mistakes, we don't pay them for that, we pay them to do their duty, by George, I'd make 'em do it.

LESTER. Ah, my dear captain, but then everybody doesn't possess your capacity for discipline.

BARKER. You're right, sir, right for once, they haven't, and the world would be a devilish sight better place if they had. (*Throws himself into chair R. C. very much out of breath*) Bah, what do you live in such an infernal sky parlor for? It's harder work getting up here than it is to climb to the mast head.

LESTER. Economy, my dear captain, sky parlors come cheap.

BARKER. You'd find them dear, sir, if I had a fit of apoplexy— Why do you want to live cheaply? Why don't you make money?

LESTER. If that's a conundrum, I give it up. I'm afraid law's overstocked, and——

BARKER. Pooh, nonsense! You want some of my energy. I'd get clients.

LESTER. How? We don't possess a legal press-gang, we can't kidnap them.

MARY. I'm sure Jack does his best.

BARKER. Are you? Then you've more trust in him than I have. He never earned a penny in his life and I don't believe he ever will.

LESTER. Now that's just where you're wrong.

BARKER. Wrong, sir? Prove it, prove it.

LESTER. I will. At this very moment——

ENTER SANFORD, L. *Very excited.*

SANFORD. Upon my word, Jack, this is too bad.

LESTER (*aside*). Another! (*Rushing up to him and shaking him violently by the hand*) My dear uncle, so delighted to see you, how are you after your trip to the country? Sit down.

SANFORD. Hang it, sir, don't talk to me, I won't have it.

LESTER. Don't get excited, uncle, as a medical man you must know it's bad for you.

SANFORD. Excited! I can't help it. You would try the patience of a saint; but it's got to stop.

LESTER. What?

SANFORD. Everything.

LESTER. Isn't that a rather large order?

SANFORD. Don't be ridiculous. I mean your evil courses have got to stop. I've had enough of them.

BARKER (*aside*). I'm sure I have.

SANFORD. I can allow for sowing a few wild oats, but hang it, sir, I believe you have sown one crop and started in on another. Do you know what this is, and this and this. (*Drawing some papers from his pocket and holding them up before LESTER.*)

LESTER (*examining them critically from a distance*). They look like bills.

SANFORD. They are bills, sir, your bills, and every one of them unpaid. Fresh proofs of your extravagance. I settled them and for the last time. If you incur any more, you can settle them yourself, and if you don't turn over a new leaf and work like an honest man, I've done with you.

MARY. Oh, Dr. Sanford, don't be too hard on him.

SANFORD. My dear Miss Barker, don't you interfere in matters which you do not understand.

BARKER. No, miss, don't you put your oar in where it's

not wanted; little girls should be seen and not heard. This young man wants a talking to and he's going to get it.

LESTER (*aside*). What a delightful prospect.

BARKER. You heard what your uncle said, sir? (LESTER *bows*) Now you shall hear what I've got to say.

LESTER. Charmed, I'm sure.

BARKER. If you don't settle down to work, and get some clients, make some money, and move to some place that is more commodious for your friends than this confounded cock-loft, I revoke my consent to your engagement with my daughter.

MARY. Oh, papa!

BARKER. Don't you interfere, miss—that, sir, is my ultimatum. (*Up to LESTER R.*)

SANFORD. And you know mine, too, sir. (*Up to LESTER L.*)

LESTER (*assuming a dignified air*). Captain Barker, Dr. Sanford, your language is intemperate; were I not withheld by motives of friendship, I might almost say actionable.

BARKER. Confound your impudence.

LESTER. I do wish you'd keep cool and sit down. I was just going to say that no doubt you think you have cause for justifiable anger.

SANFORD. Think? I should say so. (*Holding up bills.*)

LESTER (*again regarding them critically*). The documentary evidence is undeniably strong, but not conclusive, you are mistaken.

SANFORD. MISTAKEN!

LESTER. Now, do keep cool. You accuse me of idleness, of dissipation, of want of attention to business.

BARKER. Of want of business to attend to.

LESTER. We won't quarrel over a phrase, either way you are wrong. In times past I may have had my weaknesses, we all have, but now I am no longer idle, I am no longer dissipated, I attend to my business, and I *have* a business to attend to, in short I have a client.

SANFORD. { A client?

BARKER.

BARKER. Where is he?

LESTER. Here! (*Pushes aside the screen and discovers JONES smoking, he jumps up suddenly, upsets the screen and stands the picture of confusion*) Allow me to introduce you to Mr. Charles Jones, Captain Barker, Dr. Sanford.

JONES. How do you do—delighted I'm sure—a—lovely weather.

LESTER. Mr. Jones is the defendant in a difficult and intricate law suit, involving an immense fortune and a beautiful estate in— (*Aside to JONES*) Where the devil did you say that estate is?

JONES (*aside to LESTER*). Hampshire.

LESTER (*aloud*). In Hampshire. And wishing to obtain sound legal advice and support, he thought he could not do better than place the case in the hands of his old friend and schoolfellow, Jack Lester. May I, with all modesty, say that I entirely agree with him.

MARY (*running up to LESTER, taking his hand and putting her other hand upon his shoulder*). Oh, Jack, I'm so glad. I always knew you'd do well if they'd only give you half a chance.

LESTER. You are a girl of extraordinary penetration. (*Aside*) I've got a whole chance and I mean to make the most of it.

SANFORD (*going up to LESTER and shaking him by the hand*). My dear nephew, I congratulate you. I am sorry I said anything hasty, I was excited.

LESTER. Yes, I asked you to keep cool.

SANFORD. I hope this case will only be the forerunner of others.

LESTER. So do I.

BARKER (*to LESTER R.*). My boy, I congratulate you.

LESTER (*aside*). What a change in the weather.

BARKER. And I hope that as in law you get nearer the top of the tree, in lodgings you will get nearer the ground floor.

LESTER. Thank you, gentlemen, I hope you won't think me inhospitable, but really I'll have to ask you to excuse me. I've a great deal to do, my valise to pack, my——

SANFORD. Why, where are you going?

LESTER. Oh, didn't I tell you? Of course not, I forgot. The exigencies of the case necessitate my leaving for the country this afternoon. (*Knock at D. L. C.*) Come in.

ENTER MANDY D. L. C.

MANDY. 'Scuse me, sir, but is there a gentleman here called Captain Barker?

BARKER. Yes.

MANDY. Well a boy brought this letter from your house and said it was important.

BARKER. Yes, yes, (*Taking letter*) I expected it. Ladies

and gentlemen, an important business letter, will you excuse me?

LESTER. Don't mention it. (BARKER down to chair R. JONES and LESTER converse together C. MARY and SANFORD down L. BARKER opens letter nervously and glances over it) Ah, good. Here, girl, come here. (MANDY advances as if scared) You're a good girl, there's a shilling for you.

MANDY (*with a bow*). Thank you, sir.

BARKER. Now, run and get me a London & Brighton time-table just as quickly as you can.

MANDY. Yes, sir.

[EXIT D. L. C.]

(BARKER slaps his hand against his thigh, makes up his mouth as if to whistle, stops and breaks into a hoarse chuckle. LESTER leaves JONES and goes to MARY C. JONES down to CAPTAIN BARKER as if to speak to him, just as he reaches him, he gives another chuckle, extra loud, JONES starts back alarmed and goes to mantel-piece R.)

MARY. I'm sorry you've got to go away, dear, but I mustn't be selfish. It's for your good and you'll be making money.

LESTER (*softly*). For you.

ENTER MRS. JENNINGS D. L. C. *with a telegram in her hand.*
She goes down to SANFORD L.

MRS. J. A telegram, Dr. Sanford, which a boy has just brought from your house.

SANFORD. Eh? A telegram? (*Putting on his eye-glasses*) Lord bless my soul. (*In a preoccupied manner fumbling with the telegram*) There's a shilling.

MRS. J. (*drawing herself up indignantly*). Sir!

SANFORD. Eh? Oh, I beg your pardon, I forgot, I meant to say thank you.

MRS. J. No need, sir; the telegram came, the servant was out, it was my duty to bring the telegram, I always do my duty, and all I ask in return is my just dues, sometimes I get 'em, sometimes, (*with a look at LESTER*) I don't. (*Flounces out D. L. C.*)

SANFORD (*half to himself*). Dear me, dear me, how very sudden, what the deuce did I do with that time-table? (*Feels in his pockets and at last brings out a time-table.*)

ENTER MANDY D. L. C.

MANDY (*down to BARKER R.*). 'Ere's yer time-table, sir.

BARKER. Thank you. (*Takes it. BARKER and SANFORD eagerly consult time-tables.*)

LESTER. Mandy.

MANDY. Yes, sir.

LESTER. Just run into my room and get my valise ready, I'll be with you in a moment.

MANDY. All right, sir.

[EXIT L. 2 E.

SANFORD }
BARKER. } (*together looking at their watches*). Just the thing, I'll catch the 12.30 train for Brighton.

BARKER. I say, Sanford, this letter calls me away on personal business; I'll leave Mary in your charge.

SANFORD. My dear Barker, you mustn't do anything of the kind, this telegram calls me away on most important professional business, I've only fifteen minutes to catch the train.

BARKER. Confound it, sir, I've only fifteen minutes to catch the train. Surely you can see her home.

SANFORD. I can't.

BARKER. I won't.

MANDY (*stumbling in at L. 2 E. with valise in her hand*). Valise is ready, sir.

LESTER. All right, good-bye, Mary dear. (*Kisses her.*)

SANFORD. My dear Jack, Captain Barker and I are called away upon important business, we leave Mary in your charge. You'll see her home.

LESTER. Impossible.

BARKER. Why?

LESTER. Because I've only fifteen minutes left.

SANFORD. What for?

LESTER. To catch the 12.30 train for Brighton.

(BARKER drops into a chair R., SANFORD on sofa L., MANDY near D. L. rubbing her shin. LESTER C. holding MARY'S hand. JONES by mantel-piece R.)

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Parlor in Hotel at Brighton. Doors R. 1 E. and R. 2 E. Staircase R. 3 E. Glass doors C. looking out on verandah with sea view backing. Doors L. 1 E., L. 2 E., and L. 3 E. Sofa C. Small table up L. near back. Settee up R. C. chairs etc. about. As curtain rises waiter ENTERS down staircase R. 3 E. with a tray on which are some empty glasses; as he reaches the bottom of staircase and is about to cross L. bell rings in room, L. 2 E. crosses to that door and knocks.*

PEARL (*inside*). Waiter.

WAITER. Yes'm. (*Door R. 2 E. opens and BARKER puts out his head and listens.*)

PEARL. Has the doctor come yet?

WAITER. No, m'am. (*Door R. 1 E. opens and VAN SMYTHE puts out his head and listens.*)

PEARL. How tiresome. You're sure you sent that note?

WAITER. Quite sure, m'am. (*BARKER and VAN SMYTHE strain their necks to catch what is being said, become conscious of each other's presence, draw in their heads exclaiming "Bah!" and slam the doors.*)

PEARL. Well, the moment he arrives, be sure and send him up.

WAITER. Yes'm. (*Pause*) Anything more, m'am?

PEARL. No. (*WAITER turns up stage to L. 3. Door R. 2 E. opens and BARKER puts his head out cautiously.*)

BARKER (*in a hoarse whisper*). Waiter. (*WAITER turns round, BARKER beckons him to come down. WAITER crosses to him to door R. 2 E. All the time he is speaking he keeps looking over his shoulder, eying door R. 1 E. nervously*) How is Mlle. Pearl this morning.

WAITER. No better, sir.

BARKER. Too bad. Did you send up my card?

WAITER. Yes, sir.

BARKER. Did she say anything?

WAITER. No, sir.

BARKER. That's strange.

WAITER. Yes, sir.

BARKER. And she's seeing no one?

WAITER. No one, sir, except the doctor.

BARKER. Damn the doctor.

WAITER. Yes, sir.

BARKER (*taking a shilling from his pocket and giving it to waiter*). Be sure and let me know the moment she is convalescent.

WAITER. Yes, sir, thank you, sir. (CAPTAIN BARKER *retires into room R. 2 E. Door R. 1 E. opens and VAN SMYTHE puts his head out cautiously looking round.*)

VAN S. (*in a high-pitched voice*). Waiter. (WAITER *turns. VAN S. beckons mysteriously, WAITER crosses to door R. 1 E.*) How—how is Mlle. Pearl?

WAITER. No better, sir.

VAN S. Dear me, dear me. Did you send up my card?

WAITER. Yes, sir.

VAN S. And the flowers?

WAITER. Yes, sir.

VAN S. What—what—did she say?

WAITER. Said she was much obliged.

VAN S. Did she though? Really? Much obliged, eh! That was very kind. (*Pulls out a crown and gives it to WAITER.*)

WAITER. Thank you, sir.

VAN S. (*looking over his shoulder and taking WAITER by the arm confidentially*). Our friend (*pointing his thumb over his shoulder to R. 2 E.*) Has he sent up his card?

WAITER. Yes, sir.

VAN S. And some flowers?

WAITER. No, sir.

VAN S. Ah, so she wasn't obliged to him?

WAITER. No, sir.

VAN S. What a fool, what a fool, he doesn't know how to take the ladies, does he, eh? (*Pokes WAITER facetiously in the ribs*) We know a trick worth two of that, smooth the way with a little present first, and then— (*Shakes his head, winks at the WAITER knowingly, and with an air of importance sticks his thumbs in his waistcoat armholes*) Eh! Waiter? (WAITER *grins*) Be sure and let me know as soon as she is convalescent and I won't forget you.

[EXIT R. 1 E., WAITER *turns toward L. 3 E. and meets DR.*

SANFORD *who ENTERS there.*

DR. S. Waiter, I am Dr. Sanford, show me to Mlle. Pearl Lorraine's room at once.

WAITER. Right here, sir. (*Goes to door L. 2 E. followed by DOCTOR S. VAN S. and BARKER poke their heads out of their respective rooms to listen, WAITER stands so as to cover DR. S. from view.*)

DR. S. Thank you—, I am so sorry I could not come earlier, I only received Mlle. Pearl's note a few minutes ago, I hope she's not worse?

PEARL (*inside*). Is that you, doctor?

DR. S. Yes, my dear madam.

PEARL (*in a faint voice*). Come in. (*EXIT DR. S. L. 2 E. When he is gone VAN. S. and BARKER become aware of each other, both exclaim "Bah" and slam their doors. WAITER again starts for L. 3 E. LESTER descends step from R. 3 E. and comes C.*)

LESTER. Waiter. (*WAITER pauses, LESTER beckons to him and he comes down stage to sofa C. where LESTER sits*) How is Mlle. Pearl this morning?

WAITER. No better, sir.

LESTER. You sent up my card?

WAITER. Yes, sir.

LESTER. And message?

WAITER. Yes, sir.

LESTER. And she sent no answer?

WAITER. No, sir.

LESTER. Strange. You're quite sure that she fully grasped the fact that I represent the *Morning Times*, not the *Evening Times* or the *Afternoon Times*, or any other out-of-date back-number, one-horse paper, but *THE Morning Times*, whose social and political interest is so great and its circulation so enormous, that crowned heads, prime ministers, and financial speculators have actually begged to be interviewed, in order to obtain admission to its columns. Do you think she fully realized that?

WAITER (*hesitating*). Y—e—s, sir, I—think so.

LESTER. And she never said a word? She *must* be ill. See if there are any letters in the office for me. (*WAITER turns to go*) By the way have you discovered any one else bearing the name of Smith?

WAITER. No, sir, except them as I told you of.

LESTER. Yes, yes, I know, butchers, bakers, hod-carriers, common every-day sort of people, they won't do, I want a Smith that lives like—a gentleman, flings pounds round like pennies, may be little loose in the matter of grammar, but he's rich and we call it eccentricity of genius.

WAITER. Sure it ain't Van Smythe, sir, old gentleman as has that room? (*Pointing to R. 1 E.*)

LESTER. Oh, dear no, he doesn't fill the bill at all, besides he has a niece, I don't think my Smith has, at least she didn't figure in the items of description. Well, never mind, keep your eyes and ears open, and if you can produce the Smith I want, I'll not forget you. Now, see about those letters.

WAITER. All right, sir. [EXIT L. 3 E.]

LESTER (*lighting a cigar*). Well, I've had a very pleasant week at Brighton at other people's expense. Two days ago I had the good fortune to rescue a charming young lady from a watery grave or a bad ducking, and on the strength of the acquaintance just formed have started an interesting flirtation. So far I've enjoyed myself immensely, but I haven't done what I came down to do. Mlle. Pearl still declines to be interviewed, while if Smith really *is* in Brighton, he has most successfully concealed his identity. I am afraid my trip will come to an untimely end and my employers will object to pay the bill, yet what can I do? I might fake an interview but I can't fake Smith.

ENTER WAITER, *door L. 3 E. comes down C. with two letters which he hands to LESTER*..

WAITER. Two letters, sir.

LESTER (*taking them*). Thanks.

WAITER. Any thing else, sir.

LESTER. Smith, when you get him, that's all. (EXIT WAITER L. 3 E. LESTER *takes up letters and looks at them*) From Mary. (*Opening one*) Poor little girl, I suppose she's having a pretty hard time in some London lodging-house, humoring the whims of that whiskey-drinking old sea dog, whilst I'm enjoying myself and flirting with another woman. What selfish beasts men are. (*Glancing at letter*) Unjust as I thought, only sea dog is absent and an aunt is doing duty instead—from the description she must be a pleasant party to live with. (*Opens second letter*) From Jones, "Getting anxious"—No wonder. "Why don't I report?"—Nothing to say— "Why don't I find Smith?" I wish to heaven I could. It's getting warm here. Letter from Sharply yesterday raising the devil because I hadn't interviewed Pearl.

ENTER VAN. SMYTHE R. 1 E.

VAN S. Good-morning, Mr. Lester.

LESTER. Good-morning, how are you?

VAN S. Never better.

LESTER (*still glancing over letter*). That's good.

VAN S. I know how to take care of myself.

LESTER. You're lucky.

VAN S. Yes, I flatter myself I know how to look after my own interests in health and pocket, but I was young once.

LESTER. Yes, I suppose so, a long time ago.

VAN S. (*rather offended*). Not so long ago but that I can still feel for the follies of youth, and when I see a young man taking the wrong road, I can tell the symptoms at once.

LESTER. Ah, set a thief to catch a thief.

VAN S. I hold out a hand to stop him on his downward course and from my store of experience I offer him advice.

LESTER. Put on a moral air-brake so to speak? That's awfully good of you. Have a cigar. (*Takes one from his pocket and gives it to VAN S.*)

VAN S. (*lighting it*). Thank you. Young man I take a deep interest in you.

LESTER. Thanks.

VAN S. May I give you some advice?

LESTER. Why of course, give me anything you want. I never look a gift horse in the mouth.

VAN S. (*solemnly*). Mr. Lester, you are on the road to perdition.

LESTER. Going to the devil, eh? What makes you think so? Oh, I forgot, traveled the same road yourself.

VAN S. Never mind what I did, sir, but when I see a young man wasting his time and money on a woman older than himself, in a different social station, whose life and surroundings are—

LESTER. Say, what the devil are you talking about?

VAN S. Mlle. Pearl.

LESTER. What! (*Goes off in a fit of laughter.*)

VAN S. It's no laughing matter.

LESTER (*recovering himself*). I beg your pardon, but I don't even know the lady.

VAN S. But you want to?

LESTER. Simply from business motives.

VAN S. Young man, I've heard that before.'

LESTER. But it's true. I came down here as special correspondent for the Morning Times to interview her upon her recent mysterious disappearance from the bill at the Imperial, but she won't be interviewed.

VAN S. And you do not love her?

LESTER (*laughing and then checking himself*). No.

VAN S. Strange. (*Rises and walks up and down with his hands behind him, then pauses in front of LESTER*) Have you ever seen her perform?

LESTER. Frequently.

VAN S. (*executing a clumsy imitation of a ballet dancer's kick*). Seen her do the corkscrew kick?

LESTER. Yes.

VAN S. (*looking at him with an air of bewilderment*). And yet, you do not love her?

LESTER (*shaking his head*). No.

VAN S. My boy, I am proud to know you. (*Shaking him violently by the hand*) To resist the seductions of such charms as those argues a determination, a strength of will, an integrity of purpose seldom to be met with. (*Sitting beside LESTER*) But you are right, the feverish heat of the theatre is not the atmosphere for youth, you want to cultivate the domestic joys of home; to marry and settle down. Something young and fresh and innocent. (*A slight pause*) You have met my niece Hattie?

LESTER. Why, does she fill the bill?

VAN S. My dear sir, how could you think me so lacking in delicacy as to suggest such a thing? But speaking of youth and innocence naturally recalled her.

LESTER. Exactly. Oh, yes, I've met her. Had the good fortune to render her a small service.

VAN S. To be sure, you rescued her from drowning.

LESTER. Did she tell you?

VAN S. No, but it happens so often.

LESTER. Eh?

VAN S. I mean that sort of thing at the seaside, don't you know? Foolish girls, in-coming tides, and out-going ebbs, and undertows, and——

LESTER. Oh, I see. Well, it was lucky for me that the foolish girl, happened to be such a charming young lady as your niece.

VAN S. Ah, yes, she is charming, isn't she? (*Aside*) If he only knew her. (*Aloud*) And not so poor either, she is my nearest relative, and when I die she'll be rich

as well as charming, and that's what you mercenary young dogs are looking for now-a-days. (ENTER HATTIE D. C. *She is a pretty young girl and has a big rent in the front of her dress and wears an old straw hat. She has a field-glass in her hand which she deposits on small table L. and comes down on tiptoe behind VAN SMYTHE, and listens*) Oh, the man who gets my Hattie will get a treasure.

HATTIE (*throwing her arms round VAN S. and hugging him violently*). You old darling!

VAN S. (*half choked and freeing himself from HATTIE'S grasp*). God bless my soul, how can you startle one like that? You shouldn't do it, you know. How often have I told you——

HATTIE (*shaking her finger at him*). Now, uncle, don't scold your treasure. Good-morning, Mr. Lester.

LESTER (*rising*). Good-morning Miss Van Smythe. (VAN S. *rises and comes down R. glowering at HATTIE, who throws herself on the sofa C. in an easy attitude.*)

HATTIE. How lazy you folks are, lying in bed till goodness knows what hour, and then sitting round a hotel reading and smoking. Why I've been out since six o'clock roaming around, oh, everywhere.

VAN S. (*who has been regarding HATTIE'S attitude with horror and trying to attract her attention by coughing, in a sharp tone*). Hattie!

HATTIE (*curling up comfortably on the sofa*). Eh?

VAN S. (*trying to assume a mild tone*). Allow me to observe that your present attitude is to say the least——

HATTIE (*interrupting*). Comfortable. You know my principles, uncle, "Take it easy while you can." Isn't that right, Mr. Lester?

LESTER. My own sentiments, exactly.

HATTIE. You never know how long it may last.

LESTER. You never do.

VAN S. (*examining HATTIE'S dress through his glasses*). What is the matter with your dress?

HATTIE. Torn.

VAN S. I see that, but how did you do it?

HATTIE. Climbing, foot slipped, came a cropper, dress caught, result— (*Holding open tear. VAN S. turns up stage groaning.*)

LESTER. I hope you didn't hurt yourself?

HATTIE. Bruised my knee a bit, that's all.

VAN S. (*with a gasp*). Hattie!

HATTIE. What's the matter?

VAN S. How—er—how can you mention such a thing.

HATTIE. Doesn't hurt as bad as doing it. (*Making a grimace and rubbing her knee*) It'll be black and blue in the morning.

VAN S. Good heavens! Stop. It's awful.

HATTIE. I know it is, if it was yours you'd be limping.

VAN S. (*aside*). Oh, she'll ruin her prospects. (*Aloud*) My dear, what must Mr. Lester think of you?

HATTIE. Don't know— (*Looking saucily at LESTER*) don't care. (*VAN S. sits hopelessly on settee R. C.*)

LESTER (*bowing elaborately*). Thoughts of Miss Van Smythe must always be charming.

HATTIE (*half lying on the sofa and regarding LESTER critically*). Do you know you really can say a pretty thing when you want to? But I don't believe you a bit. (*Nursing her knee and shaking her head*) You're a humbug like the rest of them.

LESTER. Rest of whom?

HATTIE. Men. You're all liars. (*VAN S. springs up as if about to expostulate and then sits down again in despair*) Now don't deny it.

LESTER. I don't intend to, it's my trade.

HATTIE. Your trade? Oh, yes, you're a newspaper man.

LESTER. And a lawyer. Guilty on two counts.

HATTIE (*jumping up*). A lawyer? (*LESTER bows*) Uncle! (*Running over to VAN S., taking him by the shoulder and shaking him*) Do you hear? Mr. Lester is a lawyer. Now's your chance.

VAN S. (*aside to her*). And yours if you only knew it. (*Advancing to LESTER*) Are you really a lawyer?

LESTER. I am.

VAN S. Can you undertake a case for me?

LESTER. Certainly, that is if it does not clash with my other engagements. (*Taking out a note-book*) When does it come off?

VAN S. Two months from now.

LESTER (*pretending to consult his note-book*). I'm your man.

VAN S. I think it right to inform you that several lawyers have refused it.

LESTER. All the fools aren't dead yet.

VAN S. Perhaps when you hear all the details you will refuse it.

LESTER. No sir, I'll stick by you till your last penny is gone. Could you advance me five pounds as a retainer?

VAN S. Of course. (*Gives money.*)

LESTER. Thanks. (*Taking it.*)

VAN S. It is an intricate case.

LESTER. Don't let that worry you. Difficulties which to the non-legal mind appear as insurmountable, melt like snow in the noonday sun before the legal intellect.

VAN S. Really?

LESTER. Invariably.

VAN S. Dear me. Well, you see. (*Takes out a note-book and refers to it.*)

HATTIE. I'm off.

LESTER. Oh, don't let us frighten you away.

HATTIE. My dear Mr. Lester, it's your business to listen to cases, it isn't mine, and when you've heard as much of this one as I have, I'll guess you'll skip anyway.

VAN S. (*reprovingly*). Hattie. (*PEARL'S bell rings L. 2 E.*)

HATTIE. Oh, you know it's true; besides, I must change my dress. (*To LESTER*) If you want a walk to freshen up that legal intellect a bit, we'll take one on the beach bye and bye.

LESTER. Delighted.

HATTIE. All right. Bye-bye, wish you joy. (*Makes a grimace at VAN S., kisses her hand to LESTER and EXITS upstairs R. U. E.*)

ENTER WAITER L. 3 E., comes to L. 2 E. and knocks.

PEARL (*inside*). Come in. [*EXIT WAITER L. 2 E.*]

VAN S. (*looks after HATTIE, and then doubtfully at LESTER*). I hope you won't judge my little girl too harshly. Exuberance of youthful spirits you know, and—and——

LESTER. Oh, don't mention it. I like it.

VAN S. Do you? Well, tastes differ. My ideas of propriety are strict.

LESTER. Humbug. (*Glances at VAN S. and then over his shoulder at PEARL'S door.*)

VAN S. For the young.

LESTER. Oh!

VAN S. I inherit them from my Dutch ancestors.

LESTER. Your what?

VAN S. My Dutch ancestors. Van Smythes, old Dutch family, came over with William of Orange.

LESTER. You don't say so?

VAN S. Yes, some day I'll show you our genealogical tree, and the history of the Van Smythes, compiled by——

LESTER. Delighted. But don't you think we'd better get to business?

VAN S. Quite true, quite true. (*Seating himself beside LESTER on sofa C. taking out note-book and some papers and putting on his glasses*) Well, you see— (WAITER ENTERS from PEARL'S room L. 2 E. and stands at a respectful distance behind VAN S. and LESTER and coughs) You see, ah, yes, as I was saying— (WAITER coughs again) Eh? Did you want to see me?

WAITER. If you please, sir.

VAN S. One moment, Mr. Lester. (LESTER bows. VAN S. up with WAITER R. C.) Well?

WAITER. The doctor has ordered Mlle. Pearl champagne and I thought you might like——

VAN S. To be sure, to be sure, a bottle of the best with my compliments.

WAITER. And the flowers are looking wilted, sir.

VAN S. Dear me, dear me, I must go and get some fresh ones at once.

WAITER. Can't I get 'em for you, sir?

VAN S. No, no—er—in such a delicate matter as this I could not trust to another. Flowers can be made to express so much when you know the language. You are a good fellow. Remember, the best champagne. (*Slipping money into the WAITER'S hand.*)

WAITER. Thank you, sir.

VAN S. My hat and cane.

WAITER. Yes, sir.

[EXIT R. 1 E.

VAN S. (*down to LESTER C.*). Mr. Lester, will you excuse me? Important business—I will see you later—very sorry—circumstances over which I've no control—you understand?

LESTER. Oh, don't mention it; I am entirely at your service.

VAN S. So good of you to say so. (ENTER WAITER with hat and stick, which he gives to VAN S.) Thank you. (Up to D. C.) Waiter, make another report when I come back—and waiter, (*Almost whispering*) Keep your eye on that confounded doctor. [EXIT hurriedly D. C., WAITER L. 3 E.

LESTER (*looking after VAN S.*) Mlle. Pearl of course, he's hard hit. No fool like an old fool, it's a true saying.

ENTER HATTIE *on staircase, she comes halfway down and leans over the banisters.*

HATTIE. Mr. Lester. (LESTER turns) How's the case going on?

LESTER. It's gone off for the present, at least your uncle has.

HATTIE. Where's he gone to?

LESTER. I don't know. He said that circumstances over which he'd no control——

HATTIE. Oh! That means the actress.

LESTER (*pretending innocence*). The actress?

HATTIE. Yes. Now don't you pretend to be innocent, because it doesn't go worth a penny. You know all about uncle's little game and so do I. I don't mind, he's a bit old for that sort of thing——

LESTER. A trifle.

HATTIE. But we all like to have our fun. I've been spoony myself, besides I've seen her dance, and isn't she lovely?

LESTER. Did you see her do the corkscrew kick that so fascinated your elderly relative?

HATTIE (*nodding*). Er—er, and I tried it myself afterwards but it didn't work.

LESTER. Ah, Miss Hattie, you don't need a corkscrew kick to enhance your charms, your youth and beauty, your freshness and innocence——

HATTIE. Say, are you going to get spoony on me?

LESTER (*disconcerted*). Well, that was the idea.

HATTIE. Very, very spoony?

LESTER. I shouldn't wonder.

HATTIE. All right, go ahead, I don't mind it.

LESTER. Don't you really?

HATTIE. No, I like it. (*Down to sofa c.*) You can sit beside me. (LESTER sits) Oh, closer than that. (LESTER moves closer) You may hold my hand.

LESTER (*taking her hand*). Thank you.

HATTIE. You may put your arm round my waist if you want to.

LESTER. Why certainly. (*Puts arm round her waist.*)

ENTER DR. SANFORD L. 2 E., *sees LESTER and HATTIE and pauses a moment in astonishment.*

HATTIE. And— (*Pauses as if to consider*) I guess you can kiss me. (LESTER kisses her. SANFORD raises his eyes

and hands in horror and EXIT L. 3 E.) Oh, we'll have a lovely time.

LESTER (*aside*). Well, if this isn't rapid.

HATTIE. You can take me for moonlight strolls upon the beach.

LESTER. Yes.

HATTIE. You can quote poetry to me.

LESTER. Yes.

HATTIE. And you can buy me all the ice cream and caramels I want.

LESTER. Yes. (*Aside*) Oh, I'll not do a thing to my expense account.

HATTIE. But it won't come to much.

LESTER. Won't it? I thought that ice cream and caramels—

HATTIE. Oh, I don't mean that, I mean, I can never marry you.

LESTER. Well, I haven't asked you yet.

HATTIE. No, but you might, and I thought I'd break it to you gently.

LESTER. You're awfully good. How do you break things suddenly?

HATTIE. Eh?

LESTER. Nothing. May I ask why you are so set against putting a climax to my happiness?

HATTIE (*drawing away from him*). Because there is only one man in the world that I will marry.

LESTER. May I ask who the favored individual is?

HATTIE. Charlie.

LESTER. I beg your pardon?

HATTIE. Charlie. (*LESTER looks perplexed*) I don't know his other name, he didn't tell me he's so bashful.

LESTER. That's all right. You'll marry him.

HATTIE. Why?

LESTER. Opposites always mate.

HATTIE. I only saw him once; but I've never forgotten him.

LESTER. Happy Charlie.

HATTIE. It was one day last summer I was bathing and had waded to some rocks quite a distance from the shore. I had forgotten it was time for the tide to come in suddenly I looked round, I was surrounded by water, cut off from the shore, I—

LESTER. You stood upon the highest rock like a fright-

ened sea naiad, waved your hands, cried for help. Charlie was passing, heard your cries, saw your signals of distress, grasped the situation, threw off his coat, plunged into the sea——

HATTIE. He didn't, he took a boat.

LESTER. I see, new suit of clothes, swimming would have been more unselfish, *I* swam; anyhow, he rescued you and bore you moist but grateful to the shore. I know all about it. (*Reproachfully*) You may have forgotten but I had the good fortune to render you a similar service.

HATTIE. Oh, I remember, and it was awfully sweet of you, but you weren't as nice as Charlie, he was nicer than all the rest put together.

LESTER. Than all the — (*Looking at her curiously*) Say, how often have you been rescued from a watery grave?

HATTIE. Um— (*Considering*) Five or six times.

LESTER. Do you carry an insurance policy.

HATTIE (*laughing*). No— (*A pause. She lays her hand on LESTER'S arm*) Say, I like you.

LESTER. I am honored.

HATTIE. And I'll tell you a secret if you'll promise not to give me away.

LESTER. I promise.

HATTIE. I do it on purpose.

LESTER. What, get drowned—I mean try to get drowned?

HATTIE (*nodding*). Er—er— You see uncle isn't, well— isn't sociable, doesn't make friends, and leaves me alone; and at times I just yearn for someone to talk to, to take me around, to tease, and flirt and spoon with—and—then— well then I get rescued.

LESTER. And they won't have women in parliament! Miss Smythe, I congratulate you. You are a Napoleon in petticoats, I congratulate you.

HATTIE. And you aren't angry?

LESTER. Not a bit. I am lost in admiration.

HATTIE. I knew you were a good fellow, come and take a walk on the beach. (*Jumping up and taking his arm*) And you can be just as sweet to me as you know how. (*Bell rings*
L. 2 E.)

LESTER. Do you think your unknown admirer would approve of all this kissing and hugging and——

HATTIE. Oh, don't you worry, there'll be lots left for Charlie.
[EXIT C. D.]

ENTER WAITER L. 3 E., *comes down to door R. 2 E. and knocks.*

ENTER BARKER R. 2 E., *looks cautiously around and then speaks in a hoarse whisper.*

BARKER. Mlle. Pearl still confined to her room?

WAITER. Yes, sir.

BARKER (*jerking his thumb over his shoulder*). Our friend, where is he?

WAITER. Gone out, sir.

BARKER. And that confounded newspaper cad?

WAITER. Gone out, sir.

BARKER. And that damned doctor?

WAITER. Gone out too, sir.

BARKER. Then I'll go out myself and get a breath of fresh air, this confinement is telling on me. While I'm gone, keep your eyes open and report to me. Do your duty and you shall be rewarded.

[EXIT C. WAITER *watches him off and then crosses to door L. 2 E. and knocks.*

PEARL (*inside*). What is it?

WAITER. They're all gone, m'am.

PEARL (*inside*). All three?

WAITER. Yes, m'am.

PEARL (*inside*). Very well, then I'll come out, and get a little fresh air. (WAITER *turns up to L. 3 E. and meets MARY, who ENTERS with a traveling bag in her hand.*)

MARY. Would you please show me to room No. 21.

WAITER. Yes, m'am, right here. (*Brings MARY down to room L. 1 E., takes key from her, opens door and places satchel inside.*)

MARY. Thank you. (*Tipping him.*)

WAITER. Thank you, m'am. (*Turns to go.*)

MARY (*hesitating*). Er—er—if you please, is Mr. Lester stopping here?

WAITER. J. Lester, London Morning Times, m'am?

MARY (*puzzled*). What?

WAITER. Represents Morning Times, m'am, newspaper.

MARY. Oh, I don't know, but I think it must be the same.

WAITER. Did you want to see him, m'am?

MARY. No—that is not at present. Is he in?

WAITER. Not now, m'am, I think he went out for a stroll on the beach.

MARY (*making a start forward*). Alone?

WAITER (*doubtfully*). I think he went with Miss Van Smythe, m'am.

MARY (*indignantly*). Who's she?

WAITER Niece of old gent in No. 20, m'am, perhaps if you looked out you might see 'em. (*Pointing c.*)

MARY. Thank you. (EXIT WAITER L. 3 E.) What right has Jack got to go walking with other girls? I don't go walking with other fellows, I never get the chance, but I wouldn't if I could. (*Goes up c. and stands looking out*) Oh, what a lovely view and what a lot of people. There is an old gentleman with a stick, looks just like papa, and—yes, there's Jack, walking with a girl, I think— (*Shading her eyes with her hand*) Oh, they're so far off I can't see them, I wish Jack— (*Coming down stage sees HATTIE'S field-glass*) What luck! A field-glass—now I can satisfy myself. (*Up c. again and looks through glass, gives a slight scream, drops glass and comes down c. crying*) It is Jack, and she's taking his arm and he's holding her hand, and I'm sure he's squeezing it too. Oh, I know Jack's ways so well. (*Sits on sofa c. and begins to sob.* ENTER PEARL L. 2 E. *in a wrapper with a book in her hand. A fresh handsome looking woman of about 38. She looks at sofa where MARY is crying, goes up to her and lays her hand on her shoulder.*)

PEARL. What are you crying for?

MARY (*starting and looking up*). N—n—othing.

PEARL. That means a man of course.

MARY (*surprised*). How do you know?

PEARL. I'm young enough to remember when I was a fool myself. Don't you fret, he's not worth it, none of them are, not the best of them.

MARY. I'm—I'm—so miserable.

PEARL. I know, that's why I'm giving you good advice; you'll get over it.

MARY. It's cruel of him, and it's not only Jack but papa, he's so cross and cranky.

PEARL. He didn't take a broomstick to you, did he?

MARY (*astonished*). N—no.

PEARL. Mine did. You'll get over that too.

MARY. But he went away without even telling me where he was going, and aunty's been mean and cross, and Jack's never written——

PEARL. Jack? *That's the man?*

MARY. Yes, and so—so—I know it was very wrong but I came here to see him.

PEARL. Is he here?

MARY. Yes,—Mr. Lester.

PEARL. What. The newspaper fellow?

MARY. Something to do with the Morning Times I believe.

PEARL. *That's* the man.

MARY. Do you know him?

PEARL. No, and I don't want to. He's been annoying me for the last week, hanging round here and pestering me for an interview.

MARY. An interview?

PEARL. For his paper?

MARY. May I ask who you are?

PEARL. Certainly. Pearl Lorraine.

MARY. The dancer?

PEARL. Yes. (MARY *stares at her open-mouthed*) Bless the child, what are you staring at? Did you expect to see me in my make up with an accordion pleated skirt and pink silk stockings. No, thank you, I leave those behind me in the dressing room, I hope to leave them behind me altogether soon. You've given me your confidence, I'll give you mine. I'm going to be married.

MARY. Married? (*Interested*) Oh, I'm so glad. Do you love him very much?

PEARL. Oh, I don't know, he's a good sort— (MARY *looks shocked*) Don't look horrified. I got over the spoony stage long ago. We like each other, he respects me, and he's got money, isn't that enough?

MARY. But you're rich, aren't you?

PEARL. Well, I am at present, but in our profession we have to look to the future. When my back gets stiff and my legs rheumatic and I can't do the corkscrew kick any longer so I'll retire at the zenith of my fame as the newspapers say, and become domestic.

MARY. You'll leave the stage! (*Surprised*)

PEARL. Yes, he insists and I'm not sorry. I've had my day and I'll be glad of a little rest. I knew the Imperial wouldn't release me from my contract, and so I skipped and came down here, and a pretty hard time I've been having.

MARY. How?

PEARL. Two of my many admirers found out where I was and followed me down, old fools, old enough to know

better. They pester me with their attentions all day long, and as my intended is a trifle jealous and hasn't quite got over the popular idea that an actress is an irresponsible being, I've got to keep my room, pretend to be sick and send for the doctor, and *he* wants to make love to me. Oh, what idiots men are!

MARY. Jack's worse than an idiot.

PEARL. I'm glad you've found him out.

MARY. He's deceived me, he's making love to another girl.

PEARL. Just like 'em.

MARY. I saw them on the beach together. He was squeezing her hand, I know he was, and—and I'm so miserable. (*Sobbing.*)

PEARL. There, there, don't cry, you are tired. Go to your room and lie down and when you're rested come and talk to me, and we'll see if we can't bring him to his senses, that is if you want to, but take my advice and leave him alone.

MARY. Thank you, I'll try and rest. (*To door L. 1 E.*) I don't know why you should be so good to me.

[EXIT L. 1 E.]

PEARL. I'm sure I don't. Just like me to blurt out my whole family history to a stranger. I don't care, I like her and I'll help her if I can. (*On sofa c.*) Lord, how astonished she looked when I told her I was a dancer. (*Laughs and curls herself up on sofa. Picks up book and begins to read.*)

ENTER LESTER C. *from R.*

LESTER. Well if my much rescued young friend isn't the coolest hand I ever met, trotting me back half a mile to fetch her field-glasses, which she left—somewhere—so delightful definite. (*Comes down c., sees PEARL, who, becoming conscious of his presence, starts up. They face each other.*)

LESTER. Pearl Lorraine.

PEARL. Sir!

LESTER. Don't deny it. I've seen you, and once seen never forgotten. You are the one and only Pearl Lorraine, the admired of three continents, who has appeared before all the crowned heads of Europe, the President of the United States and the elite of the Australian Colonies, whose corkscrew kick has become a household word—who——

PEARL. Sir, I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, I am stopping at this hotel as a private individual——

LESTER. You can't do it, your life is inextricably mixed up with the throbbing pulse of the public, the public who, for three days has been in throes of agonized anxiety over your mysterious disappearance from the Imperial, and in total ignorance of your whereabouts, and in the name of the public and incidentally in the name of the Morning Times which I have the honor to represent, I demand an answer.

PEARL. You are impertinent.

LESTER. That's all right, I'll be anything in the cause of duty.

PEARL. See here, young man, I've had enough of this. The breaking of my contract is a matter between myself and the management of the Imperial, you and the public have nothing to do with it.

LESTER. Now that's just where you're wrong. We'll pass on the public for the present. To me it is the matter of the greatest importance, an interview with you may place me upon the high road to fortune, just think of it, a few words from you, and I may become famous. I want only the merest facts, I'll fill in the details myself, that's what I'm here for.

PEARL. And why should I show you any consideration?

LESTER. *You ask that? You, who no doubt have had a hard struggle to reach the summit of prosperity on which you now stand, have you no sympathy with an aspiring youth starting on the race for fame? His hopes and ambitions, his wife and family—*

PEARL. His what? You've no wife and family.

LESTER. Not at present, but I expect both shortly, and I wish to provide for them in advance. The girl I love—

PEARL. Which of 'em?

LESTER. Eh?

PEARL. I know more of you than you think and I don't approve of you. I wouldn't give you an interview if you were twice as aspiring and impertinent as you are. There! *(She turns from him, LESTER falls on his knees and catches her by the skirt.)*

ENTER BARKER C. *from R., comes down R., and stands looking at them.*

LESTER. Stop one moment, if you don't think of me think of yourself. It's the chance of a lifetime. I'll give you an interview that'll boom your stock way up. The management will forgive all past delinquencies and raise your salary

\$10,000. (PEARL tries to free herself. LESTER seizes her hand) Dear Madam, listen to me.

BARKER (*almost choking with rage*). You—you—infernal young scoundrel, what are you doing?

LESTER (*without turning*). Asking for an interview.

BARKER. On your knees?

LESTER. On my head if it's necessary. Keep quiet, I'm busy.

ENTER DR. SANFORD L. 3 E. and comes down L.

BARKER. Busy—busy! How dare you talk to me like that? Your engagement with my daughter is at an end. I've done with you.

DR. S. So have I.

LESTER. Ow——!

DR. S. After all I've said to you, after all the lessons I've inculcated, to take up with a beggarly newspaper, register yourself as representative of the Morning Times, and you told me you were coming to the country to work up a case.

LESTER. So I did—I'm working hard—and I've got another case.

ENTER MARY L. 1 E.

DR. S. I don't believe you.

BARKER. All right, when I make my fortune, you'll be sorry.

MARY. Oh, Jack!

LESTER (*advancing to her*). Mary dear.

BARKER. Don't you speak to him. (MARY shrinks from LESTER and hides her face on PEARL'S shoulder sobbing.)

LESTER. My dear girl, what is the matter?

MARY. Oh, Jack, how could you be so cruel as to flirt with another girl?

LESTER. I haven't flirted with another girl.

ENTER VAN SMYTHE C. from R., comes down R. C.

MARY. Yes you have, I saw you on the beach.

LESTER. What nonsense, you're mistaken, I haven't been on the——

VAN S. Ah, Mr. Lester what have you done with Hattie, I saw you on the beach——

LESTER. Oh, you be damned.

VAN S. I don't know where she is and I don't care. I've troubles of my own.

ENTER JONES L. U. E. *comes down* L. C.

JONES. Oh, there you are. See here, Lester, I can't stand this, you've been away a deuce of a time running up an enormous hotel bill, and not one word of information with regard to Smith.

LESTER. My dear boy, it's not my fault. I've searched every nook and corner of Brighton with a dark lantern, and he's not here.

JONES. Nonsense! I heard he was stopping at this hotel, and—and— (*Seeing VAN S.*) By Jove, there he is.

LESTER. That? Why that's Mr. Cyril Van Smythe.

JONES. Nothing of the sort, he may call himself what he likes, but he's plain Cyrus Smith, a London Chandler.

VAN S. How dare you, sir!

ENTER HATTIE C., *from R.*

HATTIE. I say, Mr. Lester— (*Seeing JONES*) Charlie! (*Rushes into his arms.*)

LESTER. Eh? What? Smith, Jones, plaintiff—defendant—Great Heavens, I'm retained on both sides! (*Sinks helplessly on sofa C., PEARL and MARY behind sofa C., HATTIE and JONES L., BARKER and SANFORD up R. C., VAN S. R.*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—LESTER'S room in the Hotel at Brighton. Door R. C. in flat, door L. 2 E. Small writing-table with pen, ink and papers on it L. near front, waste-paper basket beside it. Settee R. C., chairs, etc., about the room. Curtain rises and DISCOVERS empty stage. Door R. C. opens and LESTER ENTERS hurriedly. Shuts door with a bang, comes down to R. C. and throws himself upon settee.

LESTER. Phew! Talk about events of a lifetime crowded into a few brief moments, that last ten minutes was a record breaker. They came so fast you couldn't see 'em. Well, I'm in a nice mess, I've made enemies, estranged friends, lost the girl I love, and have to solve that difficult problem of, "How can one young man, minus uncle, minus money, minus prospects, live on the magnificent income of nothing a

year?" At present I confess I feel like giving it up. I suppose I'd better get out of this anyway. (*Rises and rings bell*) in case my friends (?) down stairs remember any other terms of endearment that they would like to shower upon me. (*Gets a valise from room L. 2 E and begins stuffing some clothes into it. Knock at D. R. C.*) Come in. (ENTER WAITER) Waiter, bring me my bill, an important event calls me away, I must leave in an hour.

WAITER. Any baggage, sir?

LESTER. No—that is, yes.

WAITER. Where for, sir?

LESTER. I don't know.

WAITER. Don't know, sir?

LESTER. I know where I want to go, but I don't know how to get there.

WAITER. Isn't it on the railway, sir?

LESTER. It isn't on the map. (WAITER *looks puzzled*) I want Utopia, a place where there are no hotels, no beaches, no field-glasses, dancers, corkscrew kicks, doctors, journalists, flirts, or fools, a place where people tell the truth sometimes and live on unlimited credit. You don't know? (WAITER *shakes his head doubtfully*) Well, then get me a second class ticket for the first station the next train stops at and I'll leave the rest to Providence.

WAITER (*rather scared*). Very well, sir. [EXIT D. R. C.]

LESTER. That man thinks I'm crazy, well, he's not far wrong,—if I can't solve this infernal problem I'll soon be fit for a lunatic asylum. (*Knock at D. R. C.*) Come in. ENTER BARKER D. R. C. *followed by MARY*) Why, my dear Captain.

BARKER. Don't talk to me, sir.

LESTER. But——

BARKER. Don't talk to me I tell you; I'm not here on my own account. If I had my will I'd not see you or speak to you again; but Mary's a fool, all women are.

LESTER. God bless them, their folly's better than our wisdom, Captain.

BARKER. I'm glad you think so, I don't. She wanted to see you again and cried and squalled so, that for peace sake I said I'd give you five minutes to say good-bye or any other tomfoolery. Five minutes, mind; that's all; so you'd better make the most of it. (*Sits chair R. and takes out his watch.*)

MARY. Jack! (*She advances to him holding out her hands, JACK takes them and holds them for a moment as if*

ashamed to speak) They told me, dear, that I must go away from you and never see you again, but I couldn't—I don't understand it all——

LESTER. Don't try to. I've acted to you like a fool and a blackguard, best do as they tell you and forget all about me, I'm not good enough for you.

MARY. You mustn't say that, I *love* you and to a woman that means everything. I don't care what you've done, or what you've been, I love you and I can't give you up.

BARKER. Three minutes gone.

MARY. I can't talk to you now but I'll come back and see you alone, and we'll fix it somehow. It must come right.

LESTER. It shall. If you stick to me I don't care for the rest. I'll show you I'm worth something.

BARKER. Four minutes gone.

LESTER. Good-bye for the present, dear, and God bless you. (*Kisses her.*)

MARY. Dear Jack, (*Clinging to him*) I know you loved me.

BARKER (*shutting his watch with a click*). Time's up, Mary. (*MARY joins him and they go up R. C.*) And now, sir, I want you to understand, that it's all over between you and my daughter. If ever you see her or speak to her again, I—I'll—d——n me, sir, I'll annihilate you.

[EXIT D. R. C. with MARY, who turns and kisses her hand to JACK, takes a flower from her dress and throws it to him.

LESTER (*picks up flower, kisses it and sits settee R. C.*). If there are any angels who can discount her I want to meet them, and I—well, I'm an idiot, pure and simple, and—oh, but this problem is getting more intricate than ever. How can one young man plus one young wife minus friends, uncle and money, continue to live on nothing? I can't give it up this time, for Mary's sake I've got to solve it. (*Pauses as if thinking*) By heaven that article, I've seen Pearl, I've spoken to her, those are the facts, if I can't weave fiction enough around them to make myself liar in chief to the Morning Times, may I die a bachelor. (*Crosses L. sits down at table and begins to write furiously*) It's an inspiration, I can see it all before me. Phew! What a chance for head liners. Black-faced type, inch and a quarter long. Sensation in a seaside hotel. The Lost Pearl found. Pursued by Lovers. (*Knock at D. R. C.*) Come in. (ENTER VAN

SMYTHE, D. R. C.) How de do, Mr. Van Smythe? Sit down. Excuse my writing. I've an article I must finish to catch the afternoon mail.

VAN S. If I disturb you I will not intrude.

LESTER. Oh, don't go on my account, I shan't be long. (*Writing furiously and reading as he writes*) "Under contract to the management of the Imperial Music Hall."

VAN S. (*looks puzzled*). I have only a few words to say to you——

LESTER. All right, fire away, I'm listening. (*Writing*) "One of our footlight favorites who——"

VAN S. What did you say, sir?

LESTER. Nothing—nothing—I'm all attention.

VAN S. Sir, I am deeply pained by your conduct.

LESTER. You're not the first. (*Writing*) "The incognito remained intact until——"

VAN S. What was that, sir?

LESTER. That was in a parenthesis, don't you mind it. You were saying?

VAN S. That I was deeply pained by your conduct. That you have fallen very low in my estimation. I didn't get a chance to express my opinion downstairs, that sea-faring individual——

LESTER. Monopolized the conversation? It's a way he has, you'd get used to it in time.

VAN S. But now, sir, I tell you that I consider your conduct, from the time of our first meeting, as characterized by deception. You won my confidence under false pretences, you trifled with the affections of my niece, you are totally unworthy of the friendship of——

LESTER (*writing*). "A well known and wealthy citizen, not wholly unconnected with chandlery."

VAN S. What? (*Furious*) That is an insult I will not endure. But I'll make you repent this. Your confreres of the bar shall know of your illegal and unjustifiable conduct. I'll ruin you, sir, I'll— (*Up to D. R. C.*)

LESTER. Don't go. You're an inspiration. I'll be through in ten minutes at this rate. (*Knock at D. R. C.*) Come in. (*ENTER JONES D. R. C. Aside*) Another. (*Aloud*) Halloa, Charlie, glad to see you. Sit down. There are cigars on the mantel-piece. Have one. You paid for 'em.

JONES. Mr. Lester, I am er—er——

LESTER. Deeply pained by my conduct? So's Van Smythe, you can shake hands on one point at all events.

JONES. Van Smythe? I see nobody of that name here. If you refer to Mr. Cyrus Smith—

VAN S. Don't you dare to take liberties with my name.

JONES. Take liberties? That's good. What have you done yourself? Haven't you——

VAN S. I've no desire to listen to any remarks from you. I was quietly interviewing Mr. Lester on business, when you saw me enter, no doubt, and followed me.

JONES. Nothing of the sort, sir, if I had known you were here I should certainly have postponed my visit.

VAN S. I don't believe you, sir.

JONES. Don't you go too far, Smith.

LESTER. Say, can't you finish it in the corridor? It's confusing and I haven't got time to referee.

VAN S. Sir, this flippancy is ill-timed.

JONES (*crossing L.*). Don't think because I'm good natured, you can carry things with a high hand. I won't stand it. I'll sue for money obtained under false pretences——

LESTER. There's nothing to prevent you *suing*.

JONES. I don't care for the money.

LESTER. I'm glad to hear it. If you are only suing on principle it's all right.

JONES. But I will punish you for the wrong done me. A wrong a man never forgives.

LESTER. What the devil are you talking about now?

JONES. You have tampered with the affections of the girl I love, you have tried to turn her from me.

LESTER. Do you allude to Mr. Van Smythe's much rescued niece?

JONES. Van Smythe! Hattie! Van Smythe's niece?

VAN S. Yes sir, she is my niece, and don't you dare to pay your addresses to her, don't you dare to *dream* of it. What right have you——

JONES. The right fate gave me. I saved her from a watery grave.

LESTER. Don't let that worry you. Fate's giving out wholesale contracts. There are others—several others.

JONES. Not with my claims. She told me that she loved me.

VAN S. I don't care what she told you, she's under age, she's my ward, and I forbid you to see her.

JONES. I will take my dismissal from none but Hattie herself, by Jove. (*Crosses R.*)

LESTER. That's right, Jones, faint heart never won fair lady, you're a man of spirit.

VAN S. Don't you interfere, sir. ((*To JONES*) I forbid you to see her.

JONES. I refuse to recognize your authority. I believe you are in connivance with that man, (*Pointing at LESTER*) to rob me of her.

LESTER. My dear boy, you're entirely mistaken. I wouldn't have your Hattie at any price. She's a dear little girl but she's too rapid for my taste. Extremes meet, she'd just suit you.

VAN S. (*crossing to LESTER*). How dare you interfere, sir? She's my niece and he shan't have her.

LESTER. Don't you be too sure; I think you underate Charlie's powers. It takes him some time to make up his mind, but he's a devil when he gets started.

ENTER DR. SANFORD D. R. C.

DR. S. Mr. Lester—(*Stops on seeing VAN S. and JONES.*)

LESTER. Halloo, Uncle.

DR. S. I thought you were alone.

LESTER. Oh, don't mind them, they're not strangers.

DR. S. To your disgraceful conduct? I am sorry to say they are not.

LESTER (*writing*). "The fair Thespian appeared to be suffering from a slight indisposition." Go ahead, uncle, I'm listening. (*DR. S. looks puzzled.*)

DR. S. I was afraid I might have been hasty downstairs, so I retired to my room to think the matter over.

LESTER. That's right, second thoughts are always best.

DR. S. In this case mine remained unaltered. You have had your last chance as far as I am concerned, in future I must request that we meet as strangers, in short, that you have nothing more to do with——

LESTER (*writing*). "A well-known physician with a large and lucrative practice."

DR. S. What's that, sir?

LESTER. Nothing. It's all right, uncle, I suppose I haven't done just as I ought or made a proper return for all your kindness, and I'm sorry, but when you ride with too tight a curb the horse is apt to kick. I'd have gone better with a softer bit.

DR. S. Remember, I'll pay your debts no more.

LESTER. Then I'll pay them myself.

DR. S. You!

LESTER. Yes. "Variety's the very spice of life."

JONES. You'll need a fortune before I get through with you.

VAN S. I've a great mind to institute proceedings for a breach of promise. (*To DR. S.*) Excuse my plain speaking, sir, but your nephew is a scoundrel.

LESTER. Tell him something he doesn't know.

DR. S. I am deeply pained by his conduct.

VAN S. No wonder, sir, he's a libertine.

JONES. A deceiver.

VAN S. A Don Juan.

JONES. A false friend.

LESTER. See here, gentlemen, I've had enough of this, you've formed your opinions of me and you've expressed them with a force and candor that does you credit, repetition becomes monotonous. (*Crossing up to D. R. C. and opening it*) And there are moments when one longs to be alone. Good day. (*DR. S., VAN S. and JONES stand looking at one another in astonishment, then DR. S. crosses up to D. R. C.*)

DR. S. Sir, you are a reprobate and I've done with you.

[EXIT D. R. C.]

LESTER. I think you said that before.

VAN S. (*up to D. R. C.*) Sir, you shall hear from me again.

[EXIT D. R. C.]

LESTER. Delighted.

JONES (*goes outside D. R. C. and then turns*). Deceiver, you shall—— (*LESTER slams door in his face. He comes down to table L.*) Thank heaven. Let's see, where was I? Ah! "Age seems to be no bar to the conquests of the fair Pearl, it is not only the youthful devotees of the stage door who worship at her shrine, but elderly gentlemen who are supposed to have laid aside the frivolities of youth." (*As he is writing this sentence, a knock at D. R. C., to which he pays no attention, then another, and finally a third, very loud. He looks up angrily, picks up a ruler and stands as if ready to throw it. Knock repeated*) Come in. (*LESTER poises ruler. ENTER PEARL, D. R. C. LESTER smiles foolishly and puts ruler behind him*) Er—Good morning, Mlle. Lorraine, won't you sit down? (*Motions to seat. PEARL pays no attention to him, but marches down to table L. and points to papers on it.*)

PEARL. Mr. Lester, is that your report of to-day's events for the Morning Times?

LESTER. It is.

PEARL. It must not be sent.

LESTER. I beg your pardon?

PEATL. I said it must not be sent.

LESTER. I beg your pardon?

PEARL. I said it must not be sent.

LESTER. I am sorry to differ with you, but——

PEARL. You have no right to drag my private affairs before the public; and if you have one spark of gentlemanly feeling in you, you will suppress that report.

LESTER. My dear lady, aren't you mounting an unnecessarily high horse? Events which take place in the public sitting room of an hotel can scarcely be called private.

PEARL. And whose fault is it that they took place there? *Yours* and those two old fools. Come, Mr. Lester, be fair. How would you like the name of the girl you love dragged into the newspapers and the unwelcome attentions that idiots force upon her made the jest of its readers? And yet that is what you design to do for me. Why? Because I am an actress, a dancer. Oh, it's a shame—a shame. (*Throws herself upon settee c. and passes her handkerchief across her face.*)

LESTER. Really, Mlle. Lorraine—I——

PEARL. Look here, Mr. Lester, this means a great deal to me, more than you think, perhaps. You spoke a little while ago of the struggles and hardships I must have endured before I made my hit. You were right, my life has been a hard one. I've seen the seamy side more than most, and now that I'm at the top of the ladder, what is it? A slip, an accident, a sudden illness, and the people who have praised and applauded would forget me in a month. I am sick of the life and I've a chance to quit it. I am engaged to a man who loves and respects me, but who holds a narrow-minded view of the stage, who is jealous and touchy. If this gets into the papers it will ruin my chance. There, you know all. I do not appeal, I do not threaten, I simply ask you, as a gentleman, will you send that report? (*Long pause. Then LESTER tears up paper and throws it into waste-paper basket*) Thank you.

LESTER. Don't mention it. In tearing up that paper, I have probably torn up my one chance of success, but that is a trifling detail which will not interest you.

PEARL. What do you mean?

LESTER. That I have wasted ten days in trying to inter-

view you and failed, so my career as a correspondent has come to an untimely end.

PEARL. But you are not a correspondent by profession, but a lawyer. Have you no clients?

LESTER. Two.

PEARL. That's something.

LESTER. Just one too many.

PEARL. Why?

LESTER. Because unfortunately, the law does not allow one man to defend and prosecute in the same case, and that is what they want me to do.

PEARL. Nonsense.

LESTER. Fact.

PEARL. I don't understand.

LESTER. Don't try to. It's a legal puzzle that the non-legal mind can scarcely grasp. However, I am afraid that the result, when worked out on a strictly logical basis, is only too plain. My career as a lawyer has also come to an untimely end.

PEARL. Then what are you going to do?

LESTER. I pass. Come to an untimely end myself I suppose. No, I won't either. By heaven, an inspiration, that article, (*Pulling paper from waste-paper basket*) shall make my fortune after all.

PEARL (*agitated*). You're not going to send it?

LESTER. No, but I'm going to threaten. There are others besides yourself who wish to avoid publicity. What a fool I was not to think of it before. I have done you a favor. Will you do me one in return?

PEARL. If I can.

LESTER. Then write to Captain Barker, Dr. Sanford and Van Smythe, anonymously, or not, as you like, and tell them about this article. (*Pointing to paper*) Portray it in lurid colors, think of your own wrongs at their hands, and let that inspire your pen. Tell them that their names will appear in the Morning Times, in black-faced type, an inch and a quarter long, and all London shall ring with the misadventures of three superannuated Lotharios.

PEARL. And what will be the result?

LESTER. In ten minutes they will be here on their knees willing to come to any terms I offer.

PEARL. You think so?

LESTER. I'm sure of it. Men of that sort like to indulge

in the follies of youth, but they don't like the world to know about it. They are at my mercy.

PEARL. Very well, I'll help you to punish them for I think they deserve it. (*Up to D. R. C., pauses a moment and then comes back*) Mr. Lester, you've acted as a friend to me and I thank you. I don't suppose we shall see much more of each other, our paths in life aren't likely to cross again, so I'll say good-bye. (*Holds out her hand, LESTER takes it*) and—(*makes rather an awkward pause*) will you take a word of advice from one who is older than you are and has perhaps seen a little more of the world?

LESTER. Yes.

PEARL. You are not a bad fellow in the main, but you're careless, thoughtless, and a trifle selfish, but with all your faults, you've won a good woman's love; in the future think a little more of her and a little less of yourself. Such love is a very precious thing; keep it if you can.

[EXIT *slowly* PEARL D. R. C.]

LESTER (*slowly, looking after her*). She's right. Jack Lester, you prided yourself on being a very clever fellow, and all the while you were little better than a fool. You had a treasure given to you and you scarcely thought it worth guarding till you had almost lost it. (*Sits, as if thinking, on settee C.*)

HATTIE (*off R. C.*). Mr. Lester, Mr. Lester!

LESTER. Now, what the devil does she want?

HATTIE (*off R. C.*). Mr. Lester, Mr. Lester, let me in.

LESTER (*opening D. R. C.*). For heaven's sake, what's the matter?

ENTER HATTIE.

HATTIE. I want to see you.

LESTER. Well, you needn't let the whole hotel know it.

HATTIE (*tragically*). I don't care if the whole world knows it.

LESTER. It's very good of you, but think of me.

HATTIE. I don't care what I do, or what I say, or what becomes of me.

LESTER. You're getting reckless.

HATTIE. I'm a wretched, miserable girl.

LESTER. What has Charlie been doing?

HATTIE. Everything.

LESTER. Well, he couldn't do more.

HATTIE. He says I am a heartless flirt and a coquette.

LESTER. Really?

HATTIE. And that we are to part forever.

LESTER. Don't you believe it. Charlie's only bluffing. With your varied experience of rescuers you ought to know that.

HATTIE. He says that I no longer love him, that you have stolen me from him.

LESTER. He doesn't know what he's talking about. I've troubles enough without that.

HATTIE (*indignantly*). Mr. Lester!

LESTER. Well, you don't want me to love you do you?

HATTIE. Of course not.

LESTER. Then don't speak in that injured tone of voice. You women never know what you want.

HATTIE. I *do*. I don't want you to love me but I want you to help me.

LESTER. How?

HATTIE. Go and explain things to Charlie.

LESTER. I've tried to, but the explanation didn't seem satisfactory. He and your uncle are the most unreasonable men I ever met.

HATTIE. Oh, uncle's a fool.

LESTER. I agree with you, but Charlie runs him a close second.

HATTIE. He doesn't. Charlie's not a fool, he's in love.

LESTER. Same thing.

HATTIE. Will you let me speak?

LESTER. Certainly. You'd do it anyway.

HATTIE. Charlie likes you.

LESTER. He's an adept at concealing his feelings.

HATTIE. Nonsense, he's a bit jealous, that's all. But if you go to him and tell him it was a mistake, and you don't love me and I don't love you, and we were just having some fun and nothing more meant, he'll believe you, because he wants to, and then you go to uncle and tell him he can never get the property back. (*A knock at D. R. C., which they do not heed*) Make it all plain to him in your clever legal way, and tell him the best thing he can do is to let Charlie marry me, and amalgamate the estates or whatever the proper term is, and then, then, we'll all be so happy. (*Pauses out of breath.*)

LESTER. Anything else?

HATTIE. No, I guess that's all, only next to Charlie I'll love you better than anyone in the world. (*Flings her arms*

round his neck and kisses him, just as MARY ENTERS D.R.C. She sees them and pauses.)

MARY. Jack!

LESTER. Oh Lord!

MARY. What does this mean, what are you——

LESTER. The victim of circumstances.

MARY. Do you call that a circumstance? (*Pointing to HATTIE.*)

LESTER. Yes,—(*Aside*) And a d—d awkward one too. (*To HATTIE*) Say, break away will you.

MARY. Pray do not disturb yourself on my account. I came here, Mr. Lester, to tell you that I would keep our engagement, that, in spite of father or friends I was willing to cast in my lot with yours, and endure what hardships life might have in store for us, together, (*Turns as if to go*) but now——

LESTER (*getting between her and the door. HATTIE on lounge c.*). Now you'll just stop and tell it to me all over again.

MARY. After what I've seen?

LESTER. Yes. You've stood by me in real troubles, forgiven me real follies, don't let a mistake part us now. Miss Van Smythe doesn't care a scrap for me and I don't care a scrap for her. She was only pleading for herself and her lover.

HATTIE. Yes, that was all.

MARY. Was it necessary to do so with her arms round your neck?

LESTER. It's a matter of opinion, I don't think so, she does. However, that's a mere detail.

MARY. I do not see it in that light.

LESTER. No, but you will. Miss Van Smythe, will you do me the favor to retire into the next room for a few moments. (*Pointing L.*)

HATTIE. But you haven't told me——

LESTER (*aside to her in a low voice*). If you don't go at once I'll tell Charlie I want to marry you myself, and advise your uncle to hang on to that property like a bulldog. Now! (*Pointing L. HATTIE looks into his face, carries her eyes along his arm and EXIT hastily D. L. LESTER stands c., MARY with her back towards him L. C. A pause*) Mary. (*She still keeps turned from him. He takes her hand and leads her to lounge c. They sit*) I want you to listen

to me and believe me, not because I deserve it, but because you love me.

MARY. Well?

LESTER. When you first gave me your love, I didn't realize what a precious thing it was. Manlike I took it almost as my right, but now I know how true and strong it is, I've learned a lesson and I'll profit by it. Love me a little still, dear, trust me again, and I'll try and be worthy of you.

MARY. Ah, Jack! Are you quite sure of yourself? Isn't this only a twinge of conscience, that will pass away to-morrow? Think well before you answer, and remember what it means to both of us.

LESTER. Perhaps what you say is true, perhaps it is too late, and after all I haven't the right to ask you, I have nothing to offer—

MARY. It isn't that, Jack. When a woman loves she doesn't stop to count the cost, she only asks for one thing, but she wants to be very sure of it, she wants to be loved in return.

LESTER. And if I say I love you with all my heart and soul, will you believe me?

MARY. Jack! (*Holding out her arms.* LESTER takes her in his arms and kisses her. *Knock at D. R. C.*)

BARKER (*outside*). Open the door, open the door, you infernal young scoundrel. (*Violent knocking.*)

MARY. It's papa.

LESTER. Quick; join Hattie in that room.

MARY. Why, Jack, I'm not ashamed to be here.

LESTER. I know that but I must speak to your father alone, I'll call you in a few minutes. (*EXIT MARY D. L.* LESTER goes to D. R. C. and opens it. *ENTER BARKER with a letter in his hand*) How are you, Captain, to what do I owe the pleasure of this visit? Sit down.

BARKER (*down c.*). Don't talk like that to me, sir, don't try to come any of your hypocritical, smug-faced politeness with me. It don't go, sir, it don't go. I know you, sir.

LESTER (*R. C.*). Really, I'm glad to find that my motives are understood and appreciated.

BARKER. Stop it, sir, stop it. (*Crossing R.*) Don't you go too far, don't drive me to a personal violence for which I shall be sorry.

LESTER. But, my dear Captain, what is the trouble, I thought we settled all our little differences some time back and agreed to meet as strangers. I'm in the dark.

BARKER. Then I'll enlighten you. Are you or are you not correspondent for the Morning Times?

LESTER. I am.

BARKER. Do you, or do you not, intend sending in an article to that paper on Mlle. Pearl Lorraine, and (*Glancing at letter*) her elderly admirers?

LESTER. I do.

BARKER. I knew if, I knew it. And you ask what the matter is? Young man, that article shall leave this hotel only over my dead body. I will not be dragged before the public as (*Glancing at letter*) a superannuated Lothario.

LESTER. Then you should not act like one.

BARKER (*changing his tone*). Mr. Lester, would you bring dishonor on the father of the woman you love?

LESTER. But that's all over now, you told me never to speak to her, never to think of her again.

BARKER. But have you no tender memories of the past?

LESTER. Not when they interfere with business.

BARKER (*groans*). Oh!

ENTER DR. SANFORD D. R. C., *with a letter*.

DR. S. Nephew, nephew, is this true?

LESTER. Is what true?

DR. S. This letter which I have just received from a friend, and which tells me that you are going to drag my name before the public in connection with a low theatrical scandal.

LESTER. I am going to send to the Morning Times an account of the adventures of Mlle. Pearl and her devotees, if that is what you mean.

DR. S. But it will ruin me, ruin my practice. Nephew, nephew, this is shameful, think of all I've done for you.

LESTER. But you're not going to do anything more. I can't live on gratitude, I've my own debts to pay, my own way to make and this article is to be the keystone to my success.

DR. S. You decline to withhold it?

LESTER. I do.

DR. S. (*down to CAPTAIN BARKER R.*). Oh, Captain, Captain.

BARKER. Oh, Doctor, Doctor!

ENTER VAN SMYTHE D. R. C., *with a letter*.

VAN S. Mr. Lester, Mr. Lester, this is infamous, I won't

have it, I'll stop it. I'll take action for defamation of character.

LESTER. And the paper comes out to-morrow morning.

VAN S. So, you know what I'm talking about?

LESTER. Well, I presume you are in the same boat as these gentlemen and object to the publicity of a newspaper article.

VAN S. I do. If I spoke harshly just now, I apologize. Think of my respectable business friends, think of my innocent niece, and have pity.

LESTER. You ought to have thought of these things before, it's too late now.

VAN S. Mr. Lester, if that article goes in I'll find some means to make you smart for it.

DR. S. So will I. Publish that article and you'll take the consequences.

BARKER. Damn me, sir, if you put me in print there'll be murder.

LESTER. Gentlemen, as a representative of the free and enlightened British Press I refuse to be muzzled.

BARKER

DR. S. } (*looking at each other*). Oh! (*They all turn*

VAN S. }

and begin walking up and down the stage.)

LESTER. But, perhaps, if we sat down and talked the matter over calmly and dispassionately, we might come to some agreement. (*All sit.* BARKER R., DR. S. L., LESTER C., VAN S. R. C.)

LESTER. Captain Barker, if I consent to do violence to my feelings, as a man and a journalist, and suppress that article, will you again give consent to my engagement with your daughter?

BARKER. I, sir? No sir. I refuse. (*Choking with rage.*)

LESTER. All right, the report goes.

BARKER. Stop. If she's fool enough to marry you, I won't prevent her. Take her and be d—d.

LESTER. Thank you. Mr. Van Smythe, will you forego all absurd ideas of breach of promise suits, and such like nonsense, consent to the marriage of your niece Hattie with Mr. Jones and settle your differences with that gentleman on a strictly amicable basis, on lines suggested by your legal adviser?

VAN S. Who's that? (*LESTER bows. Rising*) Never, sir.

I refuse to be dictated to by you or any other jackanapes like you. (*Goes up C., BARKER and DR. S. rush after him, seize him and bring him back C., BARKER R., DR. S. L.*)

LESTER. Very well, I'll ring for the waiter and mail that letter.

DR. S. Mr. Van Smythe, for heaven's sake consent. Think of our feelings if you don't think of your own.

BARKER. You pig-headed landlubber, do you want to see your name in the public prints?

DR. S. Black-faced type.

BARKER. Inch and a quarter long.

DR. S. Superannuated Lotharios.

BARKER. Antiquated Don Juans.

BOTH. Oh! (*Groan.*)

VAN S. (*after a moment's consideration*). Very well, I consent.

LESTER. Thank you. Dr. Sanford, will you once more give me a little temporary pecuniary assistance, which I guarantee to refund, and henceforth let me chose my own walk in life. And——

DR. S. And go to the devil your own way? Yes.

LESTER. Thank you. It's a bargain.

ENTER JONES D. R. C., *very excited*.

JONES. Mr. Lester, I demand satisfaction.

LESTER. Why certainly. What's the trouble?

JONES. You are trifling with the affections of the girl I love, and if her natural guardian, (*Looking at VAN S.*) cannot protect her, I will.

VAN S. What do you mean, you——

LESTER. Keep cool, keep cool, remember your promise.

VAN S. Well, what do you mean?

JONES. That your niece entered this room, half an hour ago, I have watched the corridor outside and she has never left it. She is concealed here somewhere and I demand that he give her up.

VAN S. Nonsense, I'm sure she isn't here.

JONES. She is.

BARKER. Haven't seen a glimpse of a petticoat since I came in.

DR. S. I think you are mistaken.

JONES. I'm not. (*sees D. L.*) Ha! (*Makes a rush towards it.*)

LESTER (*stopping him*). What's the matter now?

JONES. Let me pass, there is a lady in that room.

LESTER. Certainly, there are two.

ALL. What?

LESTER. Allow me. (*Up to door L. and brings out MARY and HATTIE.* HATTIE R., MARY L.)

VAN S. My niece!

BARKER. My daughter! Well, I'll be damned.

LESTER. I wouldn't jump to hasty conclusions. We'll hope for the best.

DR. S. But, sir, this is an outrage on all propriety.

LESTER. Not at all; the ladies are my clients, they were consulting me professionally when you interrupted us.

JONES. Clients? I hope they pay you good fees.

LESTER. Enormous. When you are married to Hattie, I'll send in my bill, as for Mary, she's going to give me the most precious fee a lawyer ever had, herself. (*Kisses her.*)

HATTIE (*going up to CHARLIE and coaxing him*). It's all right, Charlie dear, Mr. Lester's fixed it. Haven't you, Mr. Lester? (*LESTER bows*) And you ought to be very grateful to him. You're to keep the property and I'm to keep you.

JONES. But I—I—don't understand.

LESTER. Don't try to, my boy, it's beyond you.

DR. S. Excuse me a moment, we've forgotten one thing, Mlle. Pearl.

LESTER. What about her?

DR. S. Perhaps she may send an account of our little difficulties to the paper. That sort of person is so fond of notoriety.

BARKER. Quite right, sir, those infernal play-actors always want to see themselves in print.

LESTER. I think I can answer for Mlle. Pearl's silence, however, we'll make sure (*Rings bell*) and get her promise. (*ENTER waiter D. R. C.*) My compliments to Mlle. Pearl and ask her to step here for a few moments. [*EXIT waiter.*]

DR. S. You can't be too careful in these cases.

VAN S. Very true, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.

ENTER PEARL D. R. C.

LESTER. Excuse me for troubling you, Mlle. Pearl, but events have taken place in this hotel, which every one here is anxious to keep from publicity. As a friend will you promise me that you will not communicate them to the newspapers or use them for purposes of advertisement?

PEARL (*astonished*). What, I?

LESTER (*aside to her*). It's a bluff. Keep it up, rub it in.

PEARL. Oh!—Well, it is rather hard that after suffering so much persecution and inconvenience I should be debarred from reaping some benefit from it. Why should I consider the feelings of these gentlemen? They have treated me very badly.

BARKER. }

VAN S. } Madam, we apologize.

DR. S. }

JONES. Certainly we—

HATTIE. Shut up, Charlie, you're not in this.

JONES. But I—(*HATTIE claps her hand over his mouth*).

MARY (*going up to PEARL*). I don't quite understand it all, Mlle. Pearl, but won't you let bye-gones be bye-gones, please.

PEARL. Well, my dear, for your sake I will. I'll forgive them all and never speak of them again.

BARKER. }

VAN S. } Thank you, madam.

DR. S. }

PEARL (*aside to LESTER*). What hypocrites we are.

JONES. Er—ladies and gentlemen, excuse me, I don't wish to repeat myself, but I *don't* understand—

LESTER. Of course you don't, the untrained intellect cannot grapple with the minute and intricate details of the law. But whenever you want advice come to me. I'm doing business at the old stand with a new partner (*Putting his arm round MARY*) and I hope all my friends will give me their patronage, remembering that it takes a legal mind to solve a Legal Puzzle.

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JOSIAH'S COURTSHIP. 4 Acts; 2 hours.....	7	4
MY LADY DARRELL. 4 Acts; 2½ hours.....	9	6
MY UNCLE FROM INDIA. 4 Acts; 2½ hours.....	13	4
NEXT DOOR. 3 Acts; 2 hours.....	5	4
PHYLLIS'S INHERITANCE. 3 Acts; 2 hours.....	6	9
REGULAR FLIRT. 3 Acts; 2 hours.....	4	4
ROGUE'S LUCK. 3 Acts; 2 hours.....	5	3
SQUIRE'S STRATAGEM. 5 Acts; 2½ hours.....	6	4
STEEL KING. 4 Acts; 2½ hours.....	5	3
WHAT'S NEXT? 3 Acts; 2½ hours.....	7	4
WHITE LIE. 4 Acts; 2½ hours.....	4	3

WESTERN PLAYS

25 CENTS EACH

ROCKY FORD. 4 Acts; 2 hours.....	8	3
GOLDEN GULCH. 3 Acts; 2¼ hours.....	11	3
RED ROSETTE. 3 Acts; 2 hours.....	6	3
MISS MOSHER OF COLORADO. 4 Acts; 2½ hours....	5	3
STUBBORN MOTOR CAR. 3 Acts; 2 hours; 1 Stage Setting	7	4
CRAWFORD'S CLAIM. (15 cents.) 3 Acts; 2¼ hours.	9	3

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